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[54] INTERACTIVE ONLINE TUTORIAL SYSTEM WITH USER ASSISTANCE FUNCTION FOR SOFTWARE PRODUCTS

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[73]

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[57] ABSTRACT

An interactive online tutorial system is disclosed for providing instruction in the use of a software product operating on a data processing device. The data processing device including an instruction processing unit or CPU, a data storage resource, an input system for receiving input from a user via a mouse or keyboard, and an output system for generating output images on a video display. The tutorial system includes a first display control for generating a tutorial window in a first portion of the video display. A second display control is provided for generating a product window in a second portion of the video display. A tutorial presentation system selectively generate a plurality of tutorial text panels in response to input from the input system. The tutorial text panels include one or more lesson panels and one or more step panels associated with each lesson panel. A tutorial panel linking system links the lesson panels through a series of sequential links and links the lesson panels and their associated step panels through a series of hierarchical links. A series of tutorial panel selectors are provided for selectively activating from a lesson or step panel a link to another lesson or step panel in order to display the linked panel.

21 Claims, 14 Drawing Sheets

